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Town of Gilbert Approves Solar Power Plant

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PHOENIX, Jun 21, 2000 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- The sun shone bright last night for the Town of Gilbert as the town council (by a 5-0 vote) approved a plan by APS to begin construction on a 125-kilowatt, \$800,000 solar power facility.

The plant, slated for the corner of Cooper and Elliot Roads, will provide enough energy to power 25 to 40 homes and will be located behind Fire Station 1 and adjacent to one of the town's groundwater recharge sites that has also been developed into a migratory bird refuge.

Electricity generated by the plant will directly feed into the electrical grid system that serves APS customers. It is financed in part by APS customers who, as APS Solar Partners, pay \$2.64 per month to have 15-kilowatt hours of their electricity needs generated by solar power. The plant also is funded by the Department of Energy through the Utility Photovoltaic Group.

"I think this plant will set Gilbert apart as a leader in technology and will showcase our commitment to the environment," said Assistant Town Manager George Pettit. "We are very excited about our partnership with APS and at the prospect of building a clean quiet and environmentally friendly solar power plant in our town."

Pettit said the town is excited about displaying a renewable energy project alongside its ground water recharge facility and waterfowl habitat. Completion is scheduled tentatively for October.

When finished, the one-acre site will consist of 10 solar arrays, which will track the sun from east to west on a single axis. Each solar array, or series of panels, is about 150 feet long and 8 feet wide and will sit relatively low to the ground.

"The nice thing about this type of facility is that it is noiseless, produces no emissions and is a way to produce clean energy from a natural resource," said Cassius McChesney, solar program manager for APS' parent company, Pinnacle West.

"Through this type of partnership, we can all work together to make solar technology an affordable alternative to conventional power generation. We are excited at the opportunity to work with the Town of Gilbert."

As part of its Solar Partners Program, APS plans to have one megawatt of solar capacity installed by the end of 2000.

APS, Arizona's largest and longest-serving electric utility, serves more than 827,000 customers in 11 of the state's 15 counties. APS, with headquarters in Phoenix, is the largest subsidiary of Pinnacle West Capital Corp. (NYSE:PNW).

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